7: Thompson--373-374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 526, 535

"Unlike the Cambodians, the Laotians hold the dance in little honour. Only at certain fêtes do male dancers mimic like the Indians, and they are always accompanied by song. There are no professional dancers as in the royal and mandarinal palaces of Cambodia. The only corps de ballet that exists is at Luang-Prabang, and it is made up of little boys. Games of skill are much more pleasing to the Laotians. Boxing and wrestling, ball games, [374] and, above all, boat races take place at every festival, or as often as the Laotians can think of an excuse to have them. There is something in the temporary competitive and voluntary character of the effort required by games, as well as the change to bet on the outcome, that makes such activity irresistible to the Laotians, who hate the routine drudgery of daily toil, which is inexplicably enough the Occidental ideal."

10: d'Orleans--348-351 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 171, 527, 535, 796

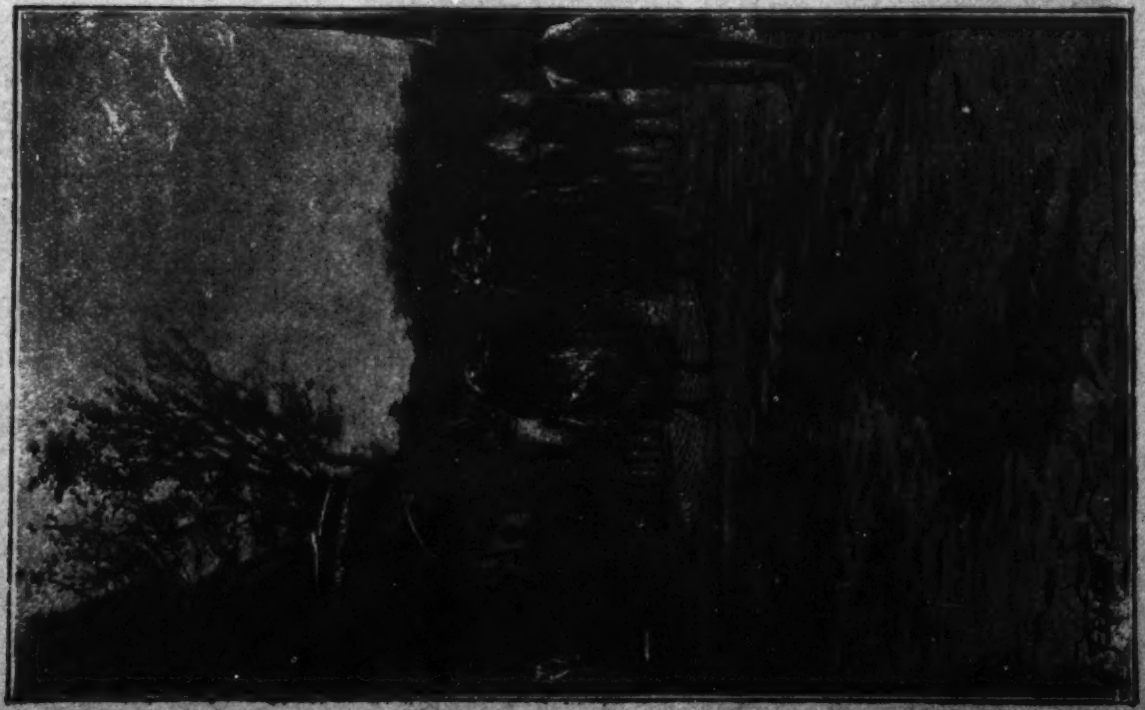
[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Whatever be the origin of these two 'monsters,' [LSS: dancers in masks] they seem to amuse the crowd very much, and when after having knelt in front of the pagoda and wished the spectators a happy new year, they begin to dance, I am surprised beyond measure to find that it is the [pages 349 and 350 contain illustration] [351] self-same dance which I saw when travelling through Thibet with M. Bonvalot two years before. The steps and the attitudes are exactly the same, and it would be interesting to know whether this is a mere chance or due to the existence of the same traditions between peoples living so far apart. The tam-tam, which is beaten by hand, without any rhythm, is the music used as an accompaniment, and from time to time the monsters make a charge and send the crowd flying, one of them chasing a young girl round a tree. I can see only Laotians among the spectators, the Kas holding aloof. When the dances are over, the procession starts on its way back, the priests being escorted back to their several pagodas."

10: d'Orleans--349
116, 527, 535, 563

T-3 (1891-92) 1894

Laos
Ethnic subgroups



NEW YEAR DANCES AT OUATE BIENG TOXO, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--352-353 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 535, 644, 782

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The 15th [LSS: of April] is a more interesting day for us, as the king is to make a progress through the streets, the event being announced early in the morning by two of the four guns which the Siamese have mounted here.

When we arrive at the pagoda of Ouate Uisonne, we find that the crowd is already very great, and that women are bringing to the pagoda flowers and meats placed in large dishes. From the street to the entrance of the temple the path is covered with bamboo mats; the peristyle is draped with yellow [353] silk, beneath which the king is seated and is taking tea, while the bonzes are reciting prayers inside. The same dances described above are again performed, with the addition this time of a third figure, viz., that of a dragon with a golden head and jaws like a crocodile, the body being formed of material which has a blue stripe down the middle of the back. There are two men inside, and the monster, which goes through the most extraordinary contortions, is called Tsinng (the lion)."

23: Franck--315-316 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 535

"The decoration speech over, the king ordered out his dancing-girls, deathly pale with hastily floured faces, and his male entertainers, in masks meant to be terrifying, the gaudy colors of their festive garments contrasting with the scarcity of soap discernible through the crevices of their costumes. They posed rather fearfully. Some of the girls were as young as ten, I am sure, and certainly none of them were [316] over twenty, for the king has a Broadway taste in these matters. Dancing-girls and masked male figures alike wore an elaborate headdress in the form of a pagoda--the Rangoon style of pagoda, not those of China--which suggested a close cultural relationship between Luang Prabang and Cambodia. As to the welter of colors that flashed forth from them in the blazing tropical sunshine I shall not even attempt to say anything; just let the bootlegged imagination run riot, so long as you do not forget the reddish teeth and the swollen lips driveling with betel-nut that gave them the look of ghouls that had just eaten a warm corpse, or of harmless childish-faced trolls that had been caught in the act of gorging themselves with currant jelly in the royal jam closet."

25; Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 527, 535, 796

"...it is difficult to spend only a few days in the Laos without living a Laotian feast-day. Take the Boun Dueun Ha, that is the New Year festival, and also that of the Little Oath (of allegiance that is). The festivities are held at the beginning of April, thus at the time of year when the days are hottest and the nights most suave.

In every village there will be a procession headed by youths bearing branches of flowers. Then will come two files of men carrying the sacred umbrellas. Afterwards six or eight men bearing upon their shoulders a palanquin, in which sits the chief of the local pagoda. The monks and their acolytes holding urns full of flowers and jars filled with lustral water, bring up the rear. So far, so good, it all seems an orderly and decent religious procession.

But as the cortège advances, the women on either side of the way throw buckets of water on the processionists, while the girls pelt them with mud. When the cortège has reached the pagoda, the whole people stand round joining in the antiphonies of praise sung in honour of the Blessed One and then fall back in a circle to watch the dances.

And these dances are not at all Buddhist. There are three main performers. There is the dragon Sing, and there is the Ngo Gneu, and then there is the Pou Gneu. These two last represent 'ancestor' spirits and their impersonators wear curious masks and their bodies are covered with beasts' skins. The wooden masks are black and swathed in streaming hair which twirls as the dance moves on. Pou Gneu has a pumpkin-like

face with a huge toothy, grinning [100] mouth such as you may see in a Hallowe'en goblin. And the ancestors' ghosts come back to plague men in animal guise."

25: Brodrick--100 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 535, 764, 782

"...the funerals in the Laos are gay ceremonies. When a man dies his body is covered in perfume-soaked sawdust piled into a hardwood coffin--the Laos is a land of fine, hard-grained woods--and the whole is placed upon a catafalque near the house. The bier is watched day and night by youths and maidens who sing songs, improvise poems, crack jokes, make love, and play musical instruments, while, from time to time, but not too often, the Buddhist monks come and read sutras of the Good Law. Cremation is not so strictly observed as in Cambodia, but most bodies are burned, at least in the towns and larger villages. After the incineration comes the Feast of the Appeasement of the Spirits. A covered altar is set up near the dead man's house, and on the altar are offerings to the manes or ghosts, offerings of frangipani flowers, of rice, of betel, of alcohol and of swords. And all night long, the women dance archaic-sounding, rhythmic measures to the tunes strummed out by an orchestra."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM2 Indochina
Laotians AMB
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292

Laotian Dancers

[facing title page]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Cambodians AM4

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Top: Laotian dancers amused by the camera
Bottom: Audience in Angkor

[facing p. 241]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable, except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally advancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself. But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM 8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*, and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be

1 [i.e., Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

253 825 292 301 535 493 511 241 461 511 792 255

115: Le Boulanger--76 H-4 (no date) 1931 (1300-1700) AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

Era of prosperity. It is a certain fact that the country was perfectly happy at this time. Feeling protected by a dreaded sovereign, the Laotians cultivated their native unconcern which resulted at once from the moderate nature of their /119/ desires and from the fertility of their soil. Living without any dire needs, all things were for them a ground for rejoicing, and their peaceful character naturally inclined them towards the satisfactions of the spirit and particularly towards music which constitutes the purest manifestation thereof (1). 175*

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

Music in Lan-Xang. They therefore held song in special favor and mingled it with dances whose expressive mimicry was related to the pantomime dances of India. The plots were based almost exclusively on love, which Laotians took pleasure in exalting under its most variegated aspects. They sometimes took the form of charming "courts of love" which remind one of those held in our French provinces in the Middle Ages, were sometimes given on the occasion of funeral ceremonies which were in no way envisaged in the same atmosphere of sadness as they are among us, or sometimes on the occasion of the inauguration of a pagoda, the construction of a house or the harvesting of a crop. 533 535

The khene. In all these circumstances either instrumental or vocal music had a place. /120/ The most common instrument was the khene, which is still widely used today. The khene is "formed of a series of bamboo tubes which are small in diameter, of various decreasing lengths and arranged in pairs, like two large pipes of Pan, usually in seven consecutive rows. The bamboo tubes are joined together by two half-gourds, fastened with wax, which form an air chamber and are provided with a small circular orifice which serves as a mouthpiece. Inside the bamboo tubes are pierced by holes, some of which let the air in, while the others are blocked with the fingers as the need arises in order to obtain notes, while the palm of the hand grasps the curve of the half-gourd. The air which elicits the notes strikes against metal reeds which are inserted in the upper part of each bamboo tube (1). 534

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts.

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals.

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of long-winded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel.

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions.

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre

536 of Burmese origin is called I-Ke or Lakhone-I-Ke.

There are also animated shadow theaters in Laos, like the Chinese or Javanese shadow theaters. The figurines in them are quite large, completely articulated and strikingly lifelike in all their attitudes and in their gestures, which correspond perfectly to the words of their manipulators. Some of these shadow figures are so well articulated that they scrupulously reproduce the movements of the mouth, nose, eyes, etc. Finally, so that they need envy no one, the Laotians also have a puppet theater [Guignol] like our French puppet theater of Lyons. The puppets represent local types and costumes, banter certain social classes with their sarcasm and ridicule certain personages who lend themselves easily to criticism. The artists who make these little wooden knaves function have as much verve, malice and wit as their colleagues in Europe, and although their wit is usually somewhat coarse it is perfectly adapted to the milieu. The puppets enjoy great public favor, and so their performances, which last far into the night, are among those most enjoyed by an audience which is always numerous and attentive. Old men, adults and children come and stay for hours at a time, gasping and lifting their faces towards the opening out of which the puppets' heads and shoulders protrude. The witty sayings, jokes of all kinds and even the gestures of these puppets often shake the whole audience with a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

•535 462 857 Dancing. The dance (fone in Laotian) finds little favor with the Laotians. Scarcely any but men engage in this pastime, and they dance a kind of Pyrrhic during the feast of rockets and a Phallic at the time of the pirogue regattas. During festivals singers and songstresses often mix dancing with their songs, but it is limited to a few rhythmic gestures of the hands and upper part of the body, without any movement of the feet.

There are no professional women dancers in Laos as there are in Siam or Cambodia. I know of only one ballet corps, [219] that of Luang-Prabang, which is composed exclusively of children and very young people. This group, which is nicely costumed, is developing under the direction of one master and several supervisors. It executes figures and a few steps which are always very graceful, while carrying multicolored lanterns in the shape of balloons or flowers. The dances are accompanied by songs and form a most harmonious and pleasant ensemble.

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inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

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(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

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Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

Tribal Tai

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so
293 to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus. 535.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write. 771 212

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased. 764

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here] 619 304

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese.

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

533 and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 439 533 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

"These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments are gongs and bells.

534 "A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 272 579 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

Meo

[197]

The Meos have several dialects in their particular language.

534 Their musical instruments are reduced to two: a kind of bagpipe resembling the Laotian organ, but in which the frame is metal and the sounds sharper; and a smaller instrument which is nearly identical with the toy known in France as a jew's-harp.

535 To the accompaniment of their instruments, the Meos dance something reminiscent of the bear dance. (Le Laos français, 1900, Schneider, Hanoi.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), Notice sur le Laos français.]

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,